

## League of Women Voters of the Kalamazoo Area

June/July 2011

www.lwvka.org

Vol. 56 No. 9

Co-Presidents: Connie Ferguson and Paula Manley

League Phone: 269-544-0303

### Reports from LWVMI Convention 2011 - Convention Business

By **Connie Ferguson**

About 100 LWVMI members met in Traverse City on May 20-22. **Paula Aldridge, Norma Clack, Connie Ferguson, Ken Manley, Paula Manley and Georgiann McWilliams** represented LWVKA. Here is a summary of what we did:

- Heard highlights of the biennium’s activities from the local Leagues.
- Participated in a community conversation on redistricting facilitated by The Center for Michigan.
- Accepted the Treasurer’s Reports for FYs 2010 and 2011 (to date). Authorized the Board to accept the Auditor’s Report for these fiscal years.
- Amended the bylaws so that they are consistent with those of LWVUS by deleting the word “honorary” before “life member” in Article III, Section 2.
- Heard **Pat Donath**, LWVUS Board and Lansing Area member speak about “Power of the Vote,” a presentation developed by LWVUS President **Elisabeth MacNamara**.
- Extended the state study on Alternate Forms of Voting until May 2012.
- Adopted a new state study on Redistricting.
- Retained existing state positions.
- Adopted a PMP (per member payment by local Leagues to LWVMI of \$21 for FY 12 and FY 13).
- Adopted budgets for FY 12 (\$38,550) and FY 13 (\$48,200). The difference is because a state convention will be held in 2013. These figures do not include the Education Fund, which is operated separately.
- Elected new officers and directors: President, **Susan K. Smith** (Ann Arbor Area); VP Program, **Fran Hamburg** (Midland); VP Advocacy, **Judy Karandjeff** (Lansing Area); VP Membership **Judy McDowell** (Midland Area); Secretary, **Eboni Lamar** (Grosse Pointe); Treasurer, **Barbara Moorhouse** (Oakland Area); Communications Director, **Camilla Davis** (Lansing

### Calendar

#### June 28 Board Meeting

Tues. Home of Paula Aldridge  
 5:30 pm Potluck dinner  
 6:00 pm Meeting  
 Questions? Call 269-544-0303  
 or email [president@lwvka.org](mailto:president@lwvka.org)  
 for more information.

#### July Board Meeting TBA

#### August Board Meeting TBA

#### Aug 26 Women’s Equality Day

*Note: Members are welcome to attend all Board Meetings.*

### Bulletins Will be Delivered via email Beginning in September

By **Michele McGowen**

In order to keep expenses low and deliver information to you in a timely fashion, the LWVKA *Bulletin* will be delivered to your email inbox starting September 2011. Members who attended our Annual Meeting in April overwhelming indicated support for this change. We will use the email address we currently have on file for you.

If you would like to update or change an email address, or would like to OPT OUT of email delivery and receive your *Bulletin* in paper through the postal service, let us know by emailing [president@lwvka.org](mailto:president@lwvka.org) with the words *Bulletin Email* in the subject line, or call (269) 544-0303.

## Reports from LWVMI Convention 2011 continued

Area, and formerly of Kalamazoo Area); Voter Service Director, **Eva Packard** (Oakland Area); Natural Resources Director, **Suzanne Dixon** (Holland Area); Voter Editor, **Paula Bowman** (Northwest Wayne County); Development Director, **Sherrill Smith** (Saginaw County); Directors at Large, **Susan Gilbert** (Berrien/Cass County) and **Debbie Macon** (Oakland Area); Nominating Committee Chair, **Connie Ferguson** (Kalamazoo Area), NC Members, **Kathy Esselman** (Lansing Area) and **Mona Hammoud** (Dearborn-Dearborn Heights).

- Thanked outgoing LWVMI President Jessica Reiser (Kalamazoo Area) for her service.
- Heard directions to the Board from convention participants.
- Attended a banquet featuring presentation of awards, including the “Making Democracy Work Award” to former governor **William G. Milliken**. The keynote speaker was **Han Voss**, Executive Director of the Michigan Land Use Institute.

### Workshop reports:

#### Best Practices for Voter Service

**By Paula Manley**

It is always fun to attend the State Convention and get ideas and network with other Leagues. Connie and I were asked to be part of the panel. Our recent school board candidate interviews which were videotaped and aired on the website was a new idea and created interest. Other presenters gave information about the best practices for candidate forums and the challenges in presenting forums.

#### Promoting Civility through Open Government

**By Paula Manley**

This workshop was presented by **Kelly McFarland Stratman** of the LWVUS. She discussed Observer Corps programs, public document audits and web audits as tools for promoting more open and accountable government. She asked what will we do with the information we obtain when we observe local governmental meetings. Having an Observer Corps is a good way to engage members. Kelly suggested highlighting observers in our *Bulletin*. Our presence at local government meetings and the relationships we develop with local officials are important if we wish to effect change. She discussed how to conduct public document audits. Public document audits give a snapshot in time of how well an organization is complying with the law. The national League has tools to help local Leagues with this process.

#### Growing Your League

**By Norma Clack**

The presenter, **Kelly McFarland Stratman**, LWVUS Director of Membership/Field Support, shared creative and useful tools for developing a plan for effective membership recruitment, member retention, and leadership development. The key concept for attaining these goals is the incorporation of membership growth and leadership development into ALL League activities. Following is an outline of the presentation:

##### MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT:

1. Make membership recruitment a component of whatever activities are already planned.
2. Recruit directly “person-to-person.” Your BEST marketing tool is your personal story about why YOU joined the League.
3. Reach out to allied partners/groups, building relationships with organiza-

**Reports from LWVMI Convention 2011 continued**

tions that have similar issues or activities.

**STRATEGIC MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:**

1. Be visible. The average person sees/hears 3,000 “messages” each day.
2. Create a media list; then build personal relationships with a few from the list.
3. Reach out to media before and during each event.
4. Be visible ALL year: keep the LWV name in public view.
5. Two-Track: Use traditional (papers/TV/radio) and new venues (blogs, lists, neighborhood newsletters).

**MEMBER RETENTION:**

1. Welcome new members with personal communications (handwritten note); provide nametags at meetings; get to know members personally.
2. Give some small tasks for involvement.
3. Mentor (welcome packets and assigning a Board member to each new member).

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

1. “Ask.”
2. Create an atmosphere for success. Give support, pass along records.

This workshop was presented as a part of the LWV-US “Membership Leadership Program” which offers support network and ongoing training, state and national coaching teams, and annual regional training.

**Convention First-timers**

**By Paula Aldridge**

Georgiann McWilliams and Paula Aldridge attended the LWVMI Convention in Traverse City for the first time. Great experience! Georgiann did some shopping while Paula went on the wine tour. They were late to the First Time Delegates Meeting, so they had to learn by doing. The speakers were all good, but former Governor **William Milliken’s** sense of humor was most enjoyable. Paula attended “Growing Your League” and “Promoting Civility/Open Government” workshops. Norma took detailed notes for the first one. At the other one we discussed the Observer Program at length. We learned so much and received a resource guide for *Observing Your Government in Action*, which we will share.

The three days were spent meeting wonderful, involved women and enjoying good food. Don’t miss the opportunity if you get a chance to be a delegate at the state or national conventions in the future.

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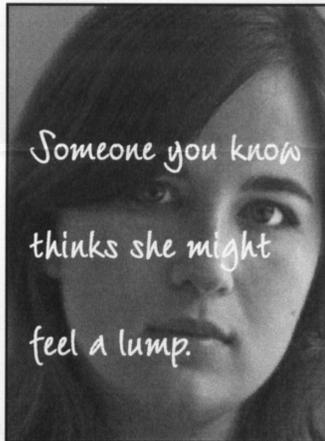


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## News From National and State

### LWVUS Studies Education Study Update

The Leaders' Guide for the study of The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education is now available on the [lwv.org](http://lwv.org) website (for Members, Projects and Programs), along with background information prepared by study committee members. Background papers to date include "Common Core Standards and Assessments," by Janelle L. Rivers, PhD; "Early Childhood Education, Equity and Funding" by Pat Aaron; "Funding and Equity Issues," by Jean Pierce; "Legislation and Funding for the Education Of Children Who are Disadvantaged," by Patricia O'Brien Libutti, PhD; and "Role Of Federal Government In Public Education: Historical Perspectives," by Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins and Margaret Hawkins Hill. The deadline for completing consensus by local Leagues will be the end of November 2011.

### Privatization Study

The LWVUS Board approved the following as the scope for this study: "The purpose of this study is to identify those parameters and policy issues to be considered in connection with proposals to transfer federal, state or local government services, assets and/or functions to the private sector. It will review the stated goals and the community impact of such transfers, and identify strategies to ensure transparency, accountability and preservation of the common good." The Study Committee will be developing resource materials and preparing consensus questions, to be available in late fall 2011. Local Leagues will have from late fall 2011 until early spring 2012 to complete their study and take consensus.

### LWVUS Action

#### League Opposes Elimination of Election Assistance Commission

League President Elisabeth MacNamara sent a letter to the Committee on House Administration urging members to oppose HR 672, which would terminate the Election Assistance Commission and transfer some of its functions to the Federal Election Commission. She also entered testimony into the official record on HR 672.

#### Elections: LWVUS Denounces DOJ Decision

Earlier this year the U.S. Department of Justice gave approval to the state of Georgia, allowing them to implement their new law that would require individuals to prove their citizenship when registering to vote. The League of Women Voters has been fighting such laws across the country and believes that this new law could disenfranchise thousands of citizens by creating insurmountable barriers to voting. Read the LWVUS response at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org), news and events, press releases.

### Clean Air Defense

The League's efforts to defend the Clean Air Act by calling attention to votes by Senator Scott Brown (R-MA) and Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), blocking new air pollution standards, have made an impact on this vital public health issue and raised the importance of protecting clean air. The accountability ads aired for two weeks in early May, calling on both Senators to "protect the people, not the polluters." The *New York Times* published a story on May 26 noting the impact of our accountability ads on this vital issue. "League

Continued on page 5

## News From National and State

leaders were motivated by what they perceived as a shift from treating air pollution as a health threat to one based more on the economic impact of new rules.” (Note: The article also stated, “The league-sponsored ads showed a new willingness by the nearly century-old group to flex political muscle. At the same time, the sharp tone of the commercials set off internal dissension, got league officials called to the Capitol for a dressing-down from Democrats, and had politicians looking at the group in a whole new light.” “League officials and their allies say the ads were a natural outgrowth of the group’s historic advocacy role on issues like clean air, which the league has championed for decades.”)

Among letters-to-the-editor published soon after the ads were aired is one from Dr. Douglas C. Johnson, a Massachusetts pulmonary physician, to *The Boston Herald*: “...LWV should be applauded for asking that Brown protect the people, not the polluters, and for presenting the truth about his disregard for the health of 134,000 Massachusetts children with asthma.” The *Boston Globe* published a front-page article quoting League President Elisabeth MacNamara and Board members. More recently, a letter was sent to Senator Scott Brown signed by numerous environmental and public health organizations and individuals asking him to stop changing the subject from clean air and the health of Americans. These same concerns have been echoed through op-eds, letters to the editor and blog postings.

### LWVUS Social Media Update

The League wants you to join our active Facebook fans, who get really passionate about is-

ues and give us great feedback! Don’t miss out on our stimulating conversations. If you haven’t connected with us yet on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters](http://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters)), be sure to become our fan! We share news articles about issues and local Leagues, and we want to hear from you. We also recently joined Twitter! Find us as @LWV or [www.twitter.com/LWV](http://www.twitter.com/LWV) and follow us. Tell your friends to find us on Facebook and Twitter, too.

### Impact on Issues Available Online or in Hard Copy

This LWVUS public policy position book is updated every two years and includes the official statements of position for each program area, briefly traces significant past actions and achievements, and indicates links among positions. LWVUS, 80 pp., \$9.00, PDF Version. 2011, Pub. No. 386 (You can purchase a copy or download it at [lwv.org](http://lwv.org), For Members, Essential League Resources.)

### UN Observer and Alternates Named

The LWVUS Board has appointed Rosalee Keech (LWV of Montville Area, NJ) as the League’s UN Observer and Suzanne Burdette Maxson Maltz (LWV Newcastle, NY) as the First Alternate. Margery Cohen (LWV of Maplewood and South Orange, NJ), Mary Fox (LWV of Newcastle, NY) and Nancy Orem Lyman (LWV of Newcastle, NY) were appointed as alternates.

## Gerrymandering

**Redistricting issues receive League attention.**

**By Paula Manley**

**T**wenty-four citizens gathered in the Van Duesen Room at the Kalamazoo Public Library on Wednesday, May 25 to view the movie *Gerrymandering*.

This documentary explored the history and process of redistricting in several states in recent years. It explained how the redistricting process can be subverted by whoever is in power and consequences for voters.

Redistricting takes place every ten years after the census numbers are in. The LWUS and LWVMI are calling for transparency in the process. We do not have a position on the process itself. The League of Women Voters

of Michigan voted at state convention to study redistricting so we will have a position and possibly advocate for changes in the process the next time redistricting occurs in 2021.

Thank you to **Terry Hluchyj** who printed posters advertising the meeting and received instruction on operation of the audio visual equipment; to **Connie Ferguson** who made phone calls and sent emails to community groups soliciting their attendance and put posters up around the downtown; and to all Leaguers who took posters and emailed the meeting announcement to their friends.

## Annual Meeting

**Members learn about state budget issues at Annual Meeting.**

**By Paula Manley**

**T**he LWVKA held its annual meeting on April 26 at the Park Club. **Don Gilmer**, the former 63<sup>rd</sup> District Michigan Representative, Michigan Budget Director, Michigan Lottery Commissioner and Kalamazoo County Administrator, was the keynote speaker. Mr. Gilmer spoke about the current state budget situation.

A video of the history of our local League, produced by **Ben Jones** and **Carol Urban** was shown to the membership. (This video also was seen at the State Convention to rave reviews.) **Kay Perry** and the Tax Attitude Group unveiled the Burma-Shave style messages for members to view and asked for additional ideas.

The meeting concluded with the annual business meeting and election of officers. The members approved the budget and the state and local positions with no changes. We also approved a minor change in our by-laws at the suggestion of LWVUS. The word honorary was stricken from the phrase "honorary life members".

Officers for next year are:

Co-Presidents—**Connie Ferguson** and **Paula Manley** (one year)

Vice President for Organization—**Kay Perry** (2 years)

Secretary—**KC Miller** (2 years)

Board Members—**Michele McGowan**, **Ruth Caputo** and **Terry Hluchyj**

Nominating Committee—**Yolanda Mitts**, Chair; **Kay Anderson** and **Rebekah Fennell**.

**Paula Aldridge**, **Normal Clack**, **April Woodward-Slack**, **Sabrina Pritchett-Evans** and **Carol Urban** will continue as Board Members. **Kay Anderson** and **Diane Worden** are leaving the Board and were thanked for their services. Co-President **Connie Ferguson** gave a review of the year's activities. **Kay Perry** was recognized for her service as co-president and LWVKA will give a donation in her name to the LWVMI.

**Please note:** The position for Vice President of Program is still open. If you are interested in serving in serving in this important position, please call **Connie Ferguson** at 375-0954.

## TAG Update

### TAG wants to change popular attitudes about taxes.

By Diane Worden

A baserunner had better tag up after the batter hits a long fly to the outfield rather than being called out for impetuously careless aggressive play. Over time local League members in the Tax Attitude Group (TAG) want to steadily influence our fellow community residents by changing popular attitudes about taxes rather than being called out (to lunch) on a basic Michigan problem. Will you join our team?

Simple verses introduced at LWVKA's annual meeting have been worked up as attractive one-line road signs in the manner of by-gone Burma-Shave ads which humorously promoted that company during economic times more severe than today's. The TAG is now seeking League members, perhaps in concert with adjacent neighbors, who live along well-trafficked roads and whose front yards have enough linear footage on which to plant a series of five signs. Ordinances prevent use of curb lawns, but use of private property for opinionated expression is classic "free speech." Can you cobble together 100-120 linear feet of contiguous yards in your residential area to support this project?

To easily read the whole TAG message from a vehicle passing by at 25-35 mph, space be-

tween signs is greater than you may think. That car also covers ground faster than you may think. More footage is needed along rural roadsides. We'd like to plant a new message once a month for a year or so in several locations, then shift to phase-2 messages yet-to-be composed. Check out *The Verse by the Side of the Road* (Frank Rowsome, Jr.) for inspiration. The TAG line (fifth line) for League purposes is "Government is us!" Your input is most welcome for additional verses with relatively short lines.

Contact **Diane Worden** to volunteer front yard footage or four-line rhymed messages (call 349-3624 or email [WordenDex@aol.com](mailto:WordenDex@aol.com)).

## Promoting general welfare

Takes a little from all,

Adds up to a lot,

And lets us all stand tall.

## New Member: Mary Lazaraton

By Norma Clack

**M**ary Lazaraton is new to the Kalamazoo Area League, but has been a LWV member in other locations since the late 1960s. She relocated to this area from the Chicago vicinity about two years ago to live nearer her daughter. Mary is enthusiastic about living in Kalamazoo and discovering how much is going on in this part of Michigan.

Mary's League involvement includes several stints as president of local chapters, in West-Bloomfield-Farmington in the 1970s and later

on in Illinois. She also served on the Illinois State Board in the early 1980s.

Since coming to Kalamazoo, she has enjoyed attending some of our meetings, including the Annual Meeting and the Community Dialogue. Mary says she is impressed with our chapter and its leadership.

She has particularly enjoyed working on local studies and also appreciates the opportunity of making lifelong acquaintances among League members. Mary says that her best friends are members of LWV!



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## Returned Service Requested

## 2011 Electronic Candidate Forum

By **KC Miller**

Providing information for voters about candidates is one of the LWVKA's missions. For the May 2011 elections, Ben Jones helped us create a new type of candidate forum by digitally recording school board candidate interviews for the Kalamazoo and Portage races. There were five candidates for two seats in each race. With assistance of Tamara Carpenter, we posted the interviews on YouTube as a digital *Voter Guide* for the school board elections. We publicized the Forum/

*Voter Guide* on WKZO, in the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, and with an email campaign. Eva Packard, LWVMI's Voter Service Director, noticed the YouTube link on our website, and asked us to talk about the project at a workshop at the LWVMI Convention in Traverse City. The traffic to the interviews was over 400 visits even though they weren't posted until April 28, only six days before the election. In the future, if the LWVKA continues to create this type of *Voter Guide*, we will produce it earlier.

## Voter Registration is continuing!

Thanks to **Sara Wick**, **Fran Eckenrode**, **Margaret McAllister** and **Diane Worden** for their continued weekly service at the Department of Human Services on Tuesday from 9:00 to 11:00. Also thanks to **Suzanne Cook**, **Beverly Byle**, **Janet Jones** and **Sabrina Pritchett-Evans** for registering voters on May 11 at the Project Connect event at the Kalamazoo County Fair grounds. And finally thanks to **Connie Ferguson** and **Martha Cohen** for being at the River Clean Up on May 14 even though the weather was stormy.

Voter registration continues and volunteers are needed each month. I would like to hear from anyone interested in becoming involved. **Karen Eddy** 269-599-6399 or [kседdy2@yahoo.com](mailto:kседdy2@yahoo.com)